

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01

AID-20 DRC-01 MC-02 /153 W  
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O R 260230Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASFV SAIGON

TO AMCONGEN HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7456

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 17005

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, HK, VS

SUBJECT: BRASS SMUGGLING FROM VIETNAM

REF: HONG KONG 9577

SUMMARY: SELAND CONTAINERSHIP S/S BEAUREGARD LEFT DANANG ON JUNE 5 AFTER RECEIVING CUSTOMS CLEARANCE. VIETNAMESE NAVY ATTEMPTED TO INTERCEPT VESSEL IN VIETNAMESE WATERS, BUT SHIP CONTINUED TO HONG KONG WHERE IT UNLOADED 360 TONS OF BRASS, APPARENTLY IN VIOLATION GVN REGULATIONS. NO CHARGES HAVE BEEN BROUGHT AGAINST CAPTAIN OR SEALAND. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JUNE 5, 1973, SEALAND CONTAINERSHIP S/S BEAUREGARD SAILED FROM DANANG WITH CARGO THAT INCLUDED TWO CONTAINERS DESCRIBED IN OUTGOING MANIFEST AS 300,000 KG OF BATTERY LEAD ACID SCRAP AND 123,468 KG OF ALUMINUM SCRAP. BOTH SHIPMENTS WERE DESTINED FOR HONG KONG CONSIGNEES. VESSEL WAS IN POSSESSION OF DANANG CUSTOMS CLEARANCE AT TIME OF SAILING, BUT LATER SAME DAY AT APPROXIMATELY 2100 HRS GVN NAVAL VESSEL, ACTING ON INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY GVN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS IN SAIGON, ATTEMPTED TO INTERCEPT BEAUREGARD AND ORDERED VESSEL TO RETURN DANANG. ALTHOUGH VESSEL WAS IN  
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VIETNAMESE TERRITORIAL WATERS, CAPTAIN REFUSED ORDER OF

VIETNAMESE NAVY AND CONTINUED ON COURSE. (CAPTAIN LATER STATED TO EMBOFF THAT HE REFUSED TO RETURN TO DANANG BECAUSE VIETNAMESE VESSEL REFUSED TO IDENTIFY ITSELF PROPERLY.) EMBASSY RECORDS DO NOT CONTAIN ANY BASIS FOR ALLEGATION THAT US NAVAL ATTACHE QUOTE IGNORED A RADIOED APPEAL TO INTERCEDE AND TURN THE SHIP BACK TO DANANG UNQUOTE. BEAUREGARD HAS MADE SEVERAL SCHEDULED VISITS TO VIETNAM SINCE INCIDENT,

AND NO CHARGES OF WRONGDOING HAVE BEEN BROUGHT AGAINST EITHER CAPTAIN OR SEALAND.

2. ACCORDING TO COPIES OF HONG KONG IMPORT LICENSES AND PERMITS TO UNLADE OBTAINED BY GVN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS, CARGO IN QUESTION WAS DESCRIBED AS 360 TONS OF BRASS CONSISTING OF CRUSHED SHELL CASINGS AND ALUMINUM MIXED WITH BRASS. IF TRUE, SHIPMENTS WOULD APPEAR TO BE IN VIOLATION OF GVN REGULATIONS IN EFFECT SINCE 1970 PROHIBITING EXPORTS OF BRASS.

3. COMMENT: AS A RESULT OF UNILATERAL ACTION OF USG ON DECEMBER 27, 1972, ALL UNRECOVERED SCRAP AMMUNITION BRASS IN VIETNAM WAS TRANSFERRED TO GVN AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS CONTROL PLACED IN HANDS OF GVN. GVN IS MAKING EFFORTS TO STOP ILLEGAL EXPORTS OF BRASS. SENSATIONAL PRESS TREATMENT OF FAILURES IS NOT HELPFUL AND WE SUGGEST ANY PRESS QUESTIONS ON BEAUREGARD CAN BE REFERRED TO GVN OR RESPONSE LIMITED TO SAYING THERE ARE NO SUBSTANTIATED CHARGES AGAINST BEAUREGARD OR SEALAND. APPLING

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## Message Attributes

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